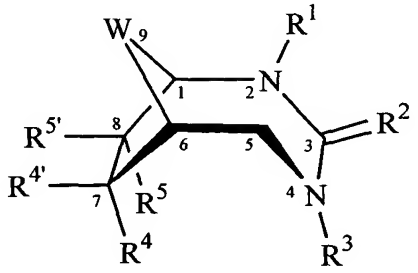
We Claim:

1. A method for the treatment of an HCV infection in a host comprising administering an effective amount of a compound of the formula (I):



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(j) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), pseudohalogen, -CN, -NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, -NH_2, -NR^6R^7, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(k) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), pseudohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, or halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, -NH_2, -NR^6R^7, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(l) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(m)R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6;

(n) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or -CR'_2, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6;

(o) R^3 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6 (C_1, C_2, C_3, C_4, C_5, C_6);

(p) alternatively if R^2 is -NR', then R^1 or R^3 can come together with -NR' to form a substituted or unsubstituted 5-7 membered ring that can include one or more heteroatoms; or

(q) if R^2 is $-CR'_2$, then R^1 or R^3 can come together with $-CR'_2$ to form a substituted or unsubstituted 5-7 membered ring that can include one or more heteroatoms; or

(r) if R^2 is $-CR'_2$, R^1 and R^3 can come together with $-CR'_2$ to form a substituted or unsubstituted bicyclic ring that can include one or more heteroatoms;

optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

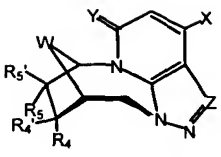
2. The method of claim 1, wherein R^5 and/or $R^{5'}$ is OH.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein R^5 or $R^{5'}$ is a residue of an amino acid.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the amino acid is valine.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the amino acid is L-valine.

6. A method for the treatment of an HCV infection in a host comprising administering an effective amount of a compound of the general formula **1 (A-D)**, **2 (A-D)**, **3 (A-B)**, **4 (A-B)**, **5 (A-B)**, **6 (A-B)**, **7 (A-C)** or **8 (A)**:



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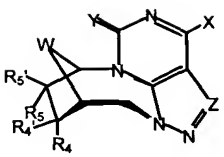

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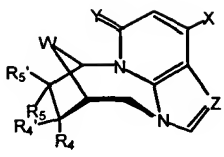

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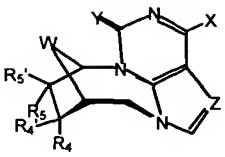

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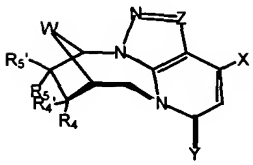

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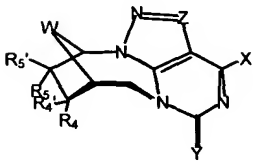

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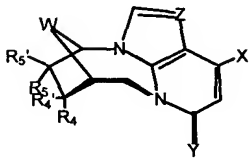

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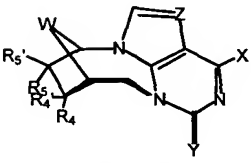

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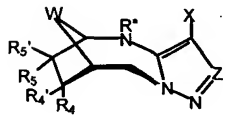

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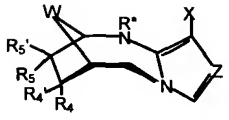

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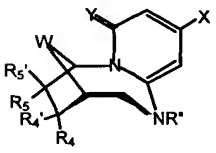

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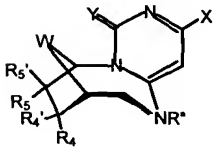

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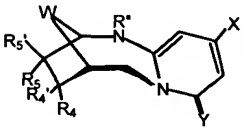

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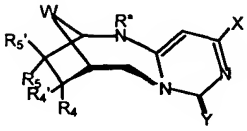

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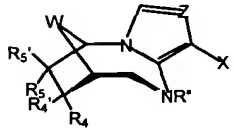

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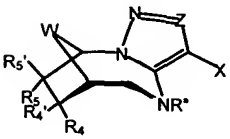

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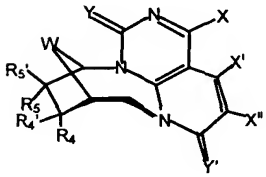

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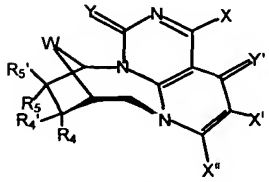

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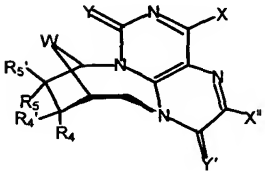

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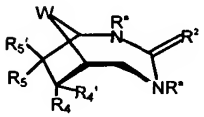


8 (A)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(a) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, -NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, -NH_2, -NR^6R^7, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(b) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(c) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(d) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or $-CR'_2$, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6;

(e) each Z, Z' and Z" is independently CH, CX or N;

(f) each X, X' and X" is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Cl, Br or I), NH_2, NHR^c, $NR^cR^{c'}$, $NHOR^c$, $NR^cNR^{c'}R^{c"}$, OH, OR^c, SH or SR^c;

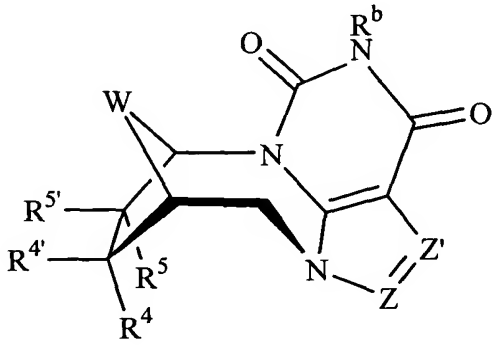
(g) each Y and Y' is O, S, NH, NR^c, NOR^c or Se;

(h) each R^a is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6; and

(i) each R^c, $R^{c'}$ and $R^{c"}$ independently is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl, or arylalkyl such as unsubstituted or substituted phenyl or benzyl, cycloalkyl, cylcopropyl;

optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

7. A method for the treatment of an HCV infection in a host comprising administering an effective amount of a compound of the general formula:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(a) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, $-NO_2$, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6 , halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(b) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(c) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(d) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or $-CR'_2$, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6 ;

(e) each Z, Z' and Z" is independently CH, CX or N;

(f) each X, X' and X" is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Cl, Br or I), NH_2, NHR^c, $NR^cR^{c'}$, $NHOR^c$, $NR^cNR^{c'}R^{c''}$, OH, OR^c, SH or SR^c;

(g) each Y and Y' is O, S, NH, NR^c, NOR^c or Se;

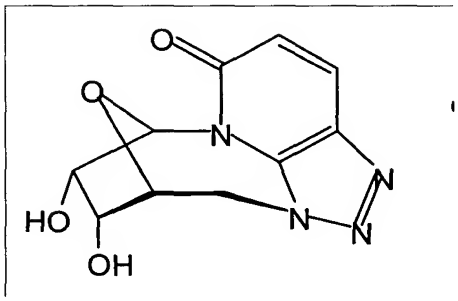
(h) each R^a is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6;

(i) R^b is R^c, OR^c, NH_2, NHR^c or $NR^CR^{C'}$; and

(j) each R^c, $R^{c'}$ and $R^{c''}$ independently is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl, or arylalkyl such as unsubstituted or substituted phenyl or benzyl, cycloalkyl, cylcopropyl;

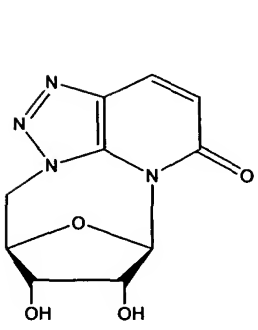
optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

8. A method for the treatment of an HCV infection in a host comprising administering an effective amount of a compound of the general formula:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. A method for the treatment of an HCV infection in a host comprising administering an effective amount of a compound of the general formula:



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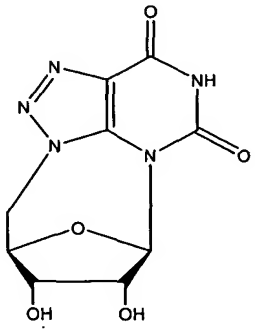
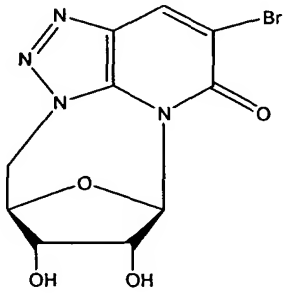


1 (K)



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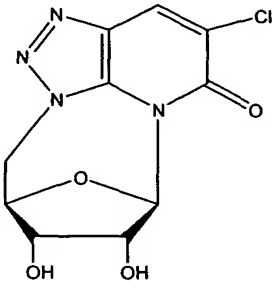
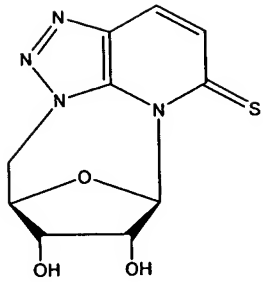


1(M)



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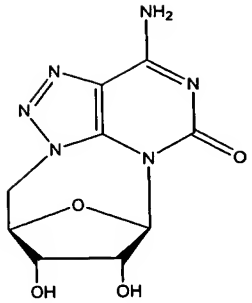

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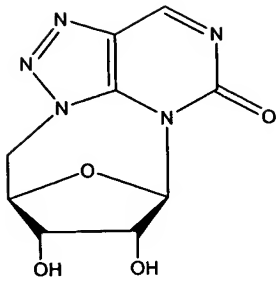

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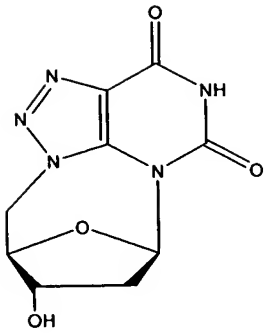

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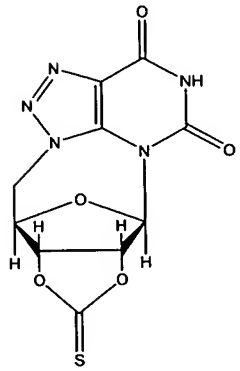

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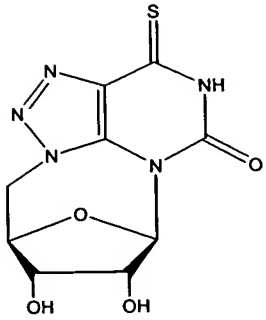

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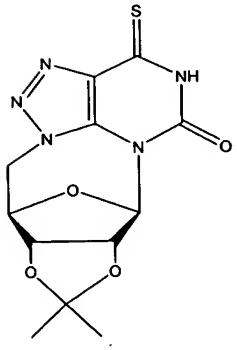

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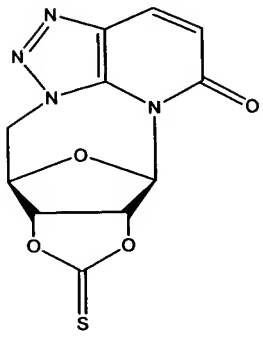

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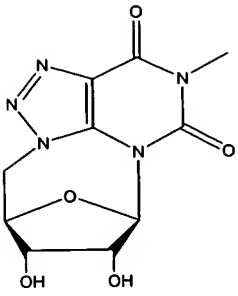

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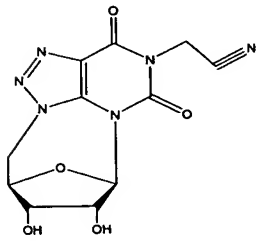

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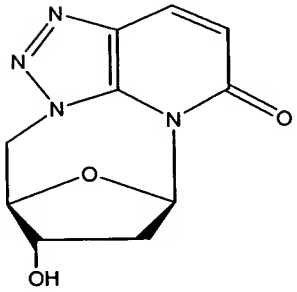

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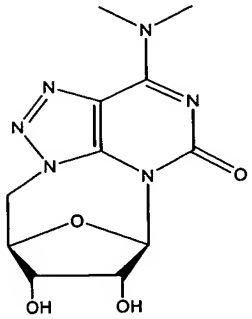

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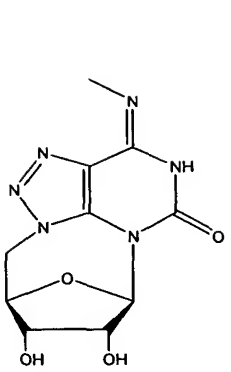

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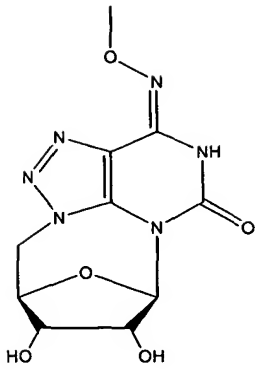

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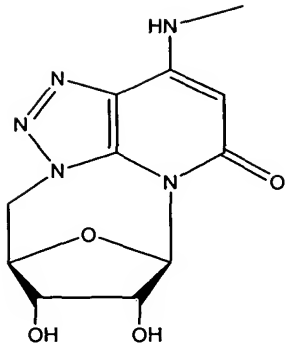
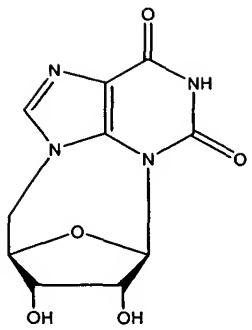
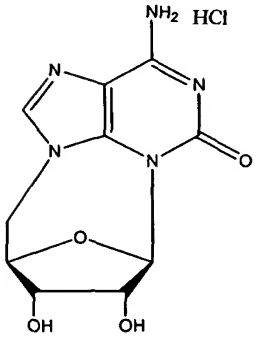


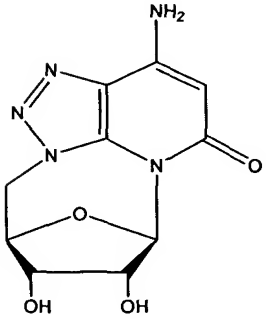
1 (AB)



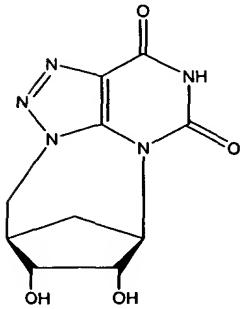
1 (AC)



1 (AD)



1 (AE)



1 (AF)

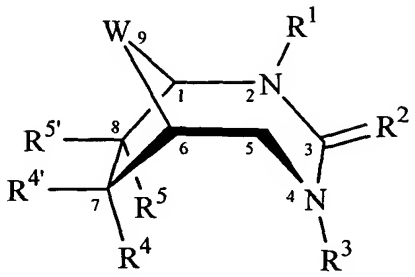
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

10. The method of any one of claims 1, 6, 7, 8, or 9, further comprising administering to the host in combination and/or alternation one or more effective anti-viral agents, optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the anti-viral agent is selected from the group consisting of ribavirin, interferon, PEGASYS (pegylated interferon alfa –2a), INFERGEN (interferon alfacon-1), OMNIFERON (natural interferon), ALBUFERON, REBIF (interferon beta-1a), Omega Interferon, Oral Interferon Alpha, Interferon gamma- 1b, Interleukin-10, IP-501, Merimebodib VX-497, AMANTADINE (Symmetrel), HEPTAZYME, IDN-6556., XTL-002, HCV/MF59, CIVACIR, LEVOVIRIN, VIRAMIDINE, ZADAXIN (thymosin alfa-1), CEPLENE (histamine dihydrochloride), VX 950 / LY 570310, ISIS 14803, IDN-6556 and JTK 003.

12. The method of any one of claims 1, 6, 7, 8, or 9, wherein the host is a human.

13. A compound of the formula (I):



(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(a) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), pseudohalogen, -CN, $-NO_2$, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(b) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), pseudohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(c) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(d) R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6;

(e) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or $-CR'_2$, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6;

(f) R^3 is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6;

(g) alternatively if R^2 is -NR', then R^1 or R^3 can come together with -NR' to form a substituted or unsubstituted 5-7 membered ring that can include one or more heteroatoms; or

(h) if R^2 is $-CR'_2$, then R^1 or R^3 can come together with $-CR'_2$ to form a substituted or unsubstituted 5-7 membered ring that can include one or more heteroatoms; or

(i) if R^2 is $-CR'_2$, R^1 and R^3 can come together with $-CR'_2$ to form a substituted or unsubstituted bicyclic ring that can include one or more heteroatoms.

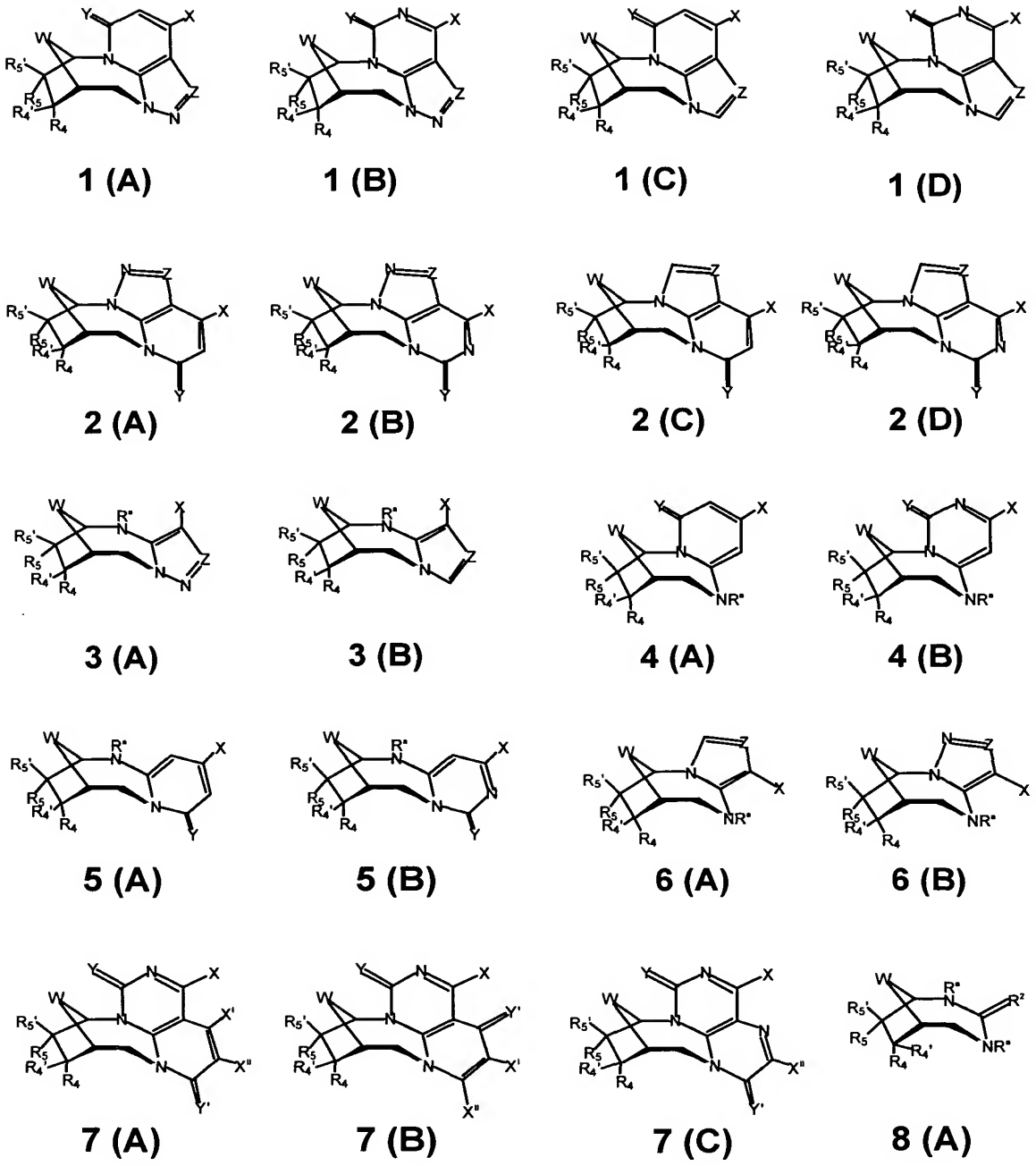
14. The compound of claim 13, wherein R^5 and/or $R^{5'}$ is OH.

15. The compound of claim 13, wherein R^5 or $R^{5'}$ is a residue of an amino acid.

16. The compound of claim 15, wherein the amino acid is valine.

17. The compound of claim 15, wherein the amino acid is L-valine.

18. A compound of the general formula **1 (A-D)**, **2 (A-D)**, **3 (A-B)**, **4 (A-B)**, **5 (A-B)**, **6 (A-B)**, **7 (A-C)** or **8 (A)**:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(a) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, $-NO_2$, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(b) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(c) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(d) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or $-CR'_2$, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6;

(e) each Z, Z' and Z" is independently CH, CX or N;

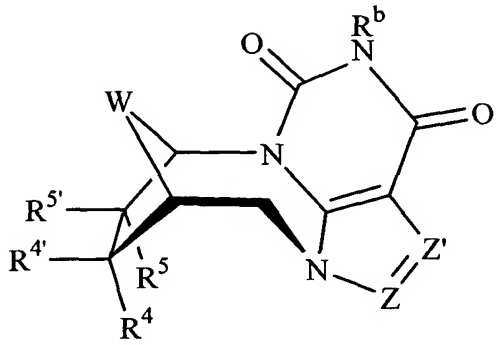
(f) each X, X' and X" is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Cl, Br or I), NH_2, NHR^c, $NR^cR^{c'}$, $NHOR^c$, $NR^cNR^{c'}R^{c''}$, OH, OR^c, SH or SR^c;

(g) each Y and Y' is O, S, NH, NR^c, NOR^c or Se;

(h) each R^a is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6; and

(i) each R^c, $R^{c'}$ and $R^{c''}$ independently is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl, or arylalkyl such as unsubstituted or substituted phenyl or benzyl, cycloalkyl, cylcopropyl.

19. A compound of the general formula:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein:

(a) each R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, $-NO_2$, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^4 and $R^{4'}$ is hydrogen;

(b) each R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Br, Cl, I), psuedohalogen, -CN, NO_2, lower alkyl of C_1-C_6, halogenated lower alkyl, hydroxyl, alkoxy, CH_2OH, CH_2OR^6, $-NH_2$, $-NR^6R^7$, or a residue of an amino acid; wherein at least one of R^5 and $R^{5'}$ is hydrogen;

(c) each R^6 and R^7 is independently hydrogen, alkyl, halogenated alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl or acyl;

(d) R^2 is oxygen, sulfur, -NR' or $-CR'_2$, wherein each R' is independently hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, aryl, or aralkyl of C_1-C_6;

(e) each Z, Z' and Z" is independently CH, CX or N;

(f) each X, X' and X" is independently hydrogen, halogen (F, Cl, Br or I), NH_2, NHR^c, $NR^cR^{c'}$, $NHOR^c$, $NR^cNR^{c'}R^{c''}$, OH, OR^c, SH or SR^c;

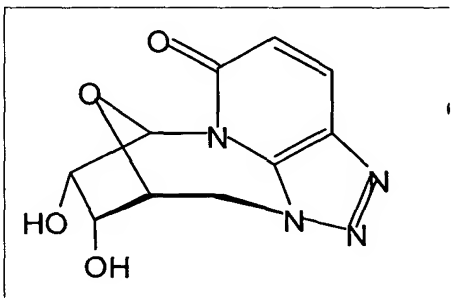
(g) each Y and Y' is O, S, NH, NR^c, NOR^c or Se;

(h) each R^a is hydrogen, lower alkyl, alkylene, alkenyl, carbocycle, aryl, heterocycle, heteroaryl, aralkyl, aminoalkyl, aminoaryl or aminoacyl of C_1-C_6;

(i) R^b is R^c, OR^c, NH_2, NHR^c or $NR^CR^{C'}$; and

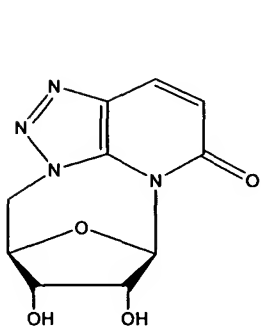
(j) each R^c, $R^{c'}$ and $R^{c''}$ independently is hydrogen, lower alkyl, lower alkenyl, aryl, or arylalkyl such as unsubstituted or substituted phenyl or benzyl, cycloalkyl, cylcopropyl.

20. A compound of the general formula:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

21. A compound of the general formula:



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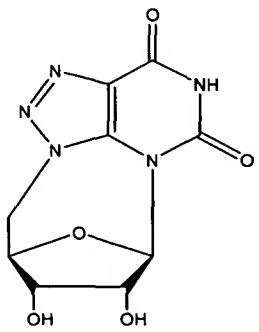

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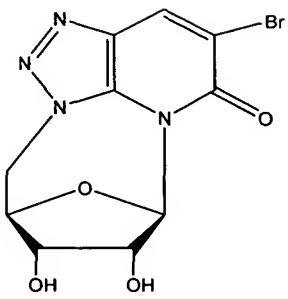

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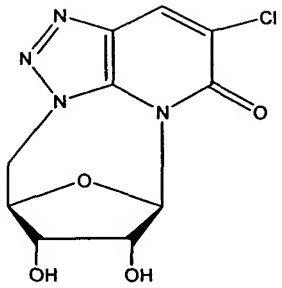
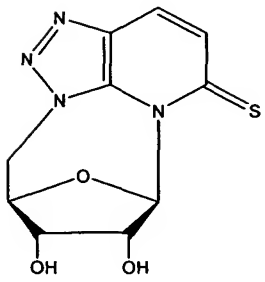


1(M)



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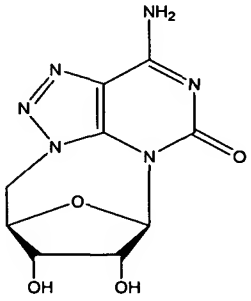

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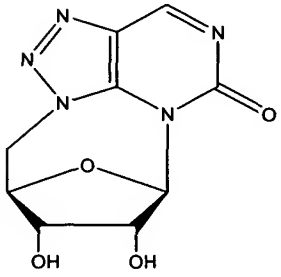

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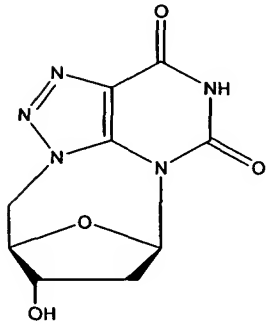

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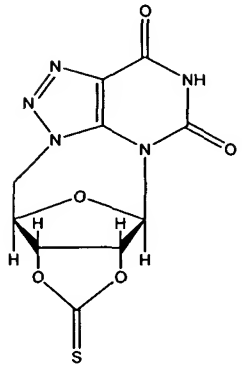

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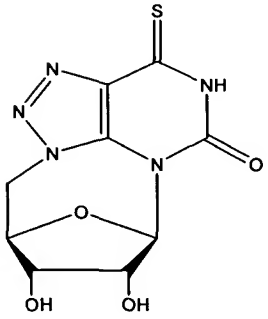

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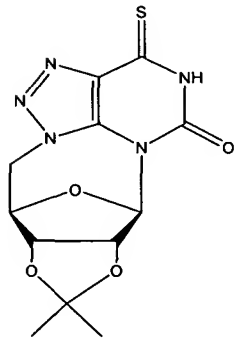

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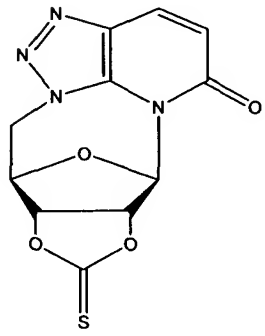

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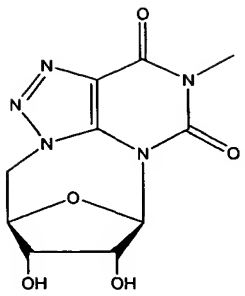

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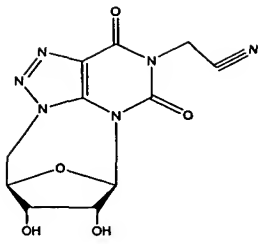

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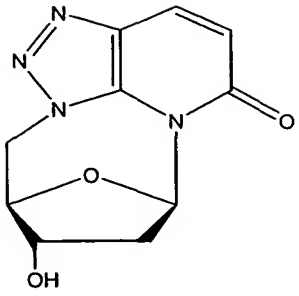

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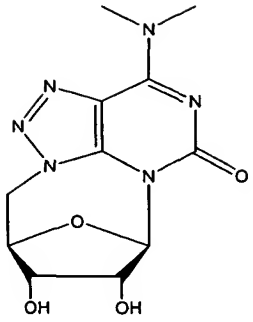

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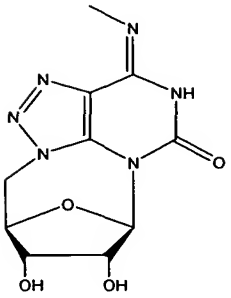

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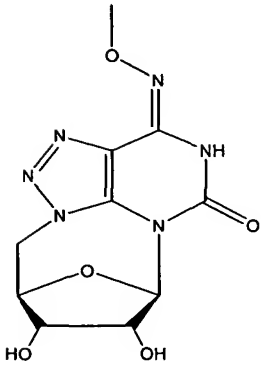

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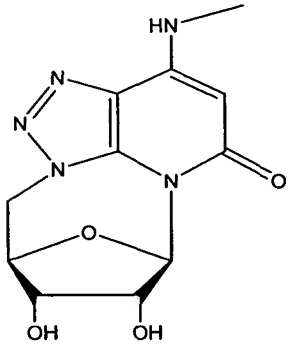
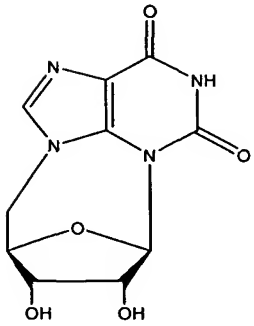


1 (AB)



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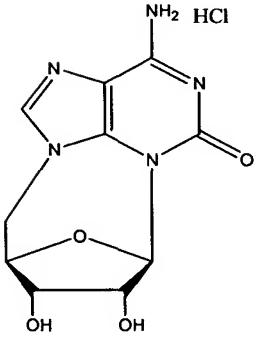

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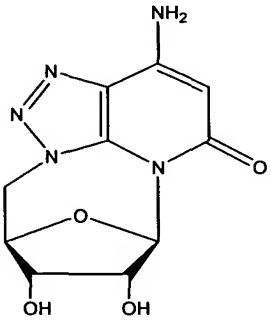

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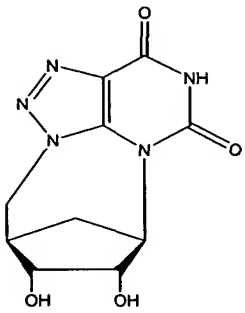

1 (AF)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

22. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of any one of the compounds of claims 13, 18, 19, 20, or 21, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

23. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of any one of the compounds of claims 13, 18, 19, 20, or 21, together with one or more effective anti-viral agents, optionally with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

24. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 23, wherein the anti-viral agent is selected from the group consisting of ribavirin, interferon, PEGASYS (pegylated interferon alfa –2a), INFERGEN (interferon alfacon-1), OMNIFERON (natural interferon), ALBUFERON, REBIF (interferon beta-1a), Omega Interferon, Oral Interferon Alpha, Interferon gamma- 1b, Interleukin-10, IP-501, Merimebodib VX-497, AMANTADINE (Symmetrel), HEPTAZYME , IDN-6556., XTL-002, HCV/MF59, CIVACIR, LEVOVIRIN, VIRAMIDINE, ZADAXIN (thymosin alfa-1), CEPLENE (histamine dihydrochloride), VX 950 / LY 570310, ISIS 14803, IDN-6556 and JTK 003.